

Why is the City of Hammond changing the water treatment chemicals?

Hammond officials, city engineers, water specialists, and water and sewer staff have been studying the potential change for over a year. When the State passed new chlorine testing limits to fend off the potential for the brain eating amoeba in water systems, the City of Hammond began flushing its water system with open hydrants to ensure enough chlorine at the ends of the system. We knew this was a wasteful use of water, but the health of our citizens was the priority along with complying with new limits. This change is being implemented because studies show that chloramines are more effective in reducing biofilms formed in distribution systems – the point where the amoeba can exist. Chloramines last longer in the system, so they give us overall better protection.

Who oversees the City of Hammond to make sure they are in compliance?

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals oversees the City of Hammond's water system and ensures that the city performs daily, weekly, and monthly tests. LaDHH has approved the plans and issued a permit to the City for this change from free chlorine to chloramines.

What do the EPA and CDC say about chloramines?

Chloramines are an EPA-approved method of system disinfection.¹ According to the CDC, "Chloramine is recognized as a safe disinfectant and a good alternative to chlorine."² It is safe for people and animals to drink as it is neutralized by the digestive process. It is also safe to cook with, bathe in, and for general use.

What other water systems use chloramines?

The Tangipahoa Parish Water District, Shreveport, Monroe, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans all use chloramines in their water systems. Approximately 70% of the water delivered to customers in Louisiana is chloramine-treated water. In Louisiana, 52 water systems use chloramines to deliver water to 1,168,939 people.³

What about people on dialysis?

People on dialysis still need to dechlorinate the water. Most do now given the free chlorine residual in the City of Hammond water system.

What about pets and plants?

Most plants and pets are fine with chloramine. But fish, amphibians, and reptiles need dechlorinated water because they absorb water directly into their bloodstreams. Just like chlorine, chloramine will need to be removed from water for fish, amphibian and reptile use.

The City of Hammond performs routine tests and maintenance to ensure its water is free of lead.

The Hammond main lines are cast iron, ductile line, and PVC—no lead. In the past 40 years, the City has almost exclusively used PVC water mains which are married together with rubber gasketed joints (not lead). The only spans of lead in the system *may* be service line taps that are less than a foot in length, and these are rare. Service connections in old Hammond are mixed. Some may have been lead, but the majority are not. No water services installed after about 1970 use any lead components. Every time a lead service connection is encountered, the lead connection is removed and upgraded to new materials. Routinely the City of Hammond runs the lead and copper test protocol that is mandated by EPA. The City of Hammond has never failed the lead and copper test on our water system. In all our research, we haven't found any chloramine systems that have failed this test.

Additional Resources

Water Quality & Health (2/19/2016)

<http://www.waterandhealth.org/facts-chloramine-drinking-water-treatment/>

Wired Magazine (2/5/2016)

<http://www.wired.com/2016/02/chloramines/>

Information from Berkley Engineering (6/10/2016)

<http://engineering.berkeley.edu/2016/06/qa-lead-chloramines-and-drinking-water-safety>

¹ EPA Website: <https://www3.epa.gov/region9/water/chloramine.html>

² CDC Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/public/chloramine-disinfection.html>

³ LaDHH Presentation: http://dhh.louisiana.gov/assets/oph/Center-EH/engineering/Disinfection/Chloramination_Presentation.pdf